

[54] SCANNER WITH COUPON VALIDATION

[57]

ABSTRACT

A point of sale (POS) bar code scanner such as in common use in retail stores includes provision for reading bar coded redemption coupons (or other bar coded documents redeemable for value) in a manner secure from a human operator. Integration of functions between the POS scanner and the coupon reader varies with different embodiments described. Through software associated with bar code decoding logic, a comparison is made between information on a validation coupon and information on items presented for purchase, and a decision is made as to whether the redemption coupon is valid and redeemable in this transaction. In one embodiment, the bar code scanner simply receives the redemption coupon face down on the product scanner window, and integrated decode logic of the scanner identifies the bar code as belonging to a redemption coupon, then makes the comparison and validation of the coupon for the particular transaction. In some embodiments of the invention, the POS product scanner has a special beam exit window through which the scanning beam is diverted when it is signified that a redemption coupon is to be read, with a coupon reading scan pattern. After validation the coupon may be punched or otherwise cancelled, and/or sent to a secure container. Several types of securing devices are disclosed, for preventing subsequent use of redeemed coupons.